

Appl. No. 10/673,994
Amdt. Dated December 27, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2005

• • R E M A R K S / A R G U M E N T S • •

The Official Action of September 27, 2005 has been thoroughly studied. Accordingly, the changes presented herein for the application, considered together with the following remarks, are believed to be sufficient to place the application into condition for allowance.

By the present amendment, the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7 of the specification has been changed to include a description of the embodiment of the connection region 6 that is shown in Fig. 3.

In addition, the brief descriptions of Figs. 1 and 3 have been correspondingly amended on pages 3 and 4.

In addition, the Abstract has been changed to comply with the Examiner's request.

Also by the present amendment independent claim 1 has been changed to include the limitations of the body fluid absorbent article originally recited in claim 9 and to recite that the ribbon-like strips are "individual" ribbon-like strips that have a thickness and extend along the longitudinal direction while being arranged in the transverse direction.

Independent claim 1 has further been changed to recite that the "individual" ribbon-like strips have proximal end portions and "free, unattached" distal end portions.

Support for the changes to independent claim 1 can be found in the second full paragraph on page 4, the description as to how the ends of the ribbon-like strips gather together in the paragraph

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bridging pages 5 and 6, and the illustrations of the ribbon-like strips in Figs. 1 and 3 which show that the distal end portions 5 are free and unattached.

Also by the present amendment the dependent claims has been changed in the manner suggested by the Examiner and otherwise to address and overcome the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph or be commensurate with the changes made to independent claim 1.

Claim 9 has been canceled.

Entry of the changes to the specification, Abstract and claims is respectfully requested.

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to the drawings, noting that the embodiment of the connecting region depicted in Fig. 1 was different from the connecting region depicted in Fig. 2.

In response to the objection to the drawings, the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7 of the specification has been changed to include a description of the embodiment of the connection region 6 that is shown in Fig. 3 and the brief description of Fig. 1 and 3 have been correspondingly changed.

On page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to the Abstract because of the terminology used and a problem with the wording at lines 3-5.

By the present amendment the Abstract has been changed to address and correct the matters noted by the Examiner.

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Also on page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 8 and 9. Under this objection the Examiner has included suggested changes which applicants have adapted for claim 8. Claim 9 has been canceled.

Claims 1-8 remain pending in this application.

Claim 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Under this rejection the Examiner has noted indefiniteness problems with lines 4-6 of claim 1 and the preamble of claim 5.

The amendments presented herein for the claims are believed to address and overcome the outstanding rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Statutory Invention Registration No. H1585 to Ahr.

For the reasons set forth below, it is believed that all of the pending claims are allowable over Ahr and therefore, the outstanding rejection of the claims should properly be withdrawn.

Favorable reconsideration by the Examiner is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner has relied upon Ahr as teaching braided structures 44A-C which the Examiner has interpreted as being applicants' claimed ribbon-like structures.

The braided structures of Ahr necessarily have ends that would have to be considered either exclusively interconnected or possibly exclusively free if one were to determine that the ends are "free" under the topsheet 38.

In either event, the braided structures of Ahr cannot be properly interpreted as having proximal end portions that are interconnected by a "sheet-like connecting region" (interpreted by the

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Examiner as being "any or all the other sheet members of the article") and "free, unattached" distal end portions as required by applicants' independent claim 1.

In Ahr, the structure of the ends or end portions of the braded structures are the same.

The difference in the structure of the ends or end portions of the braded structures of Ahr and the urine guiding article of the present invention are quite clear.

Whereas the braded structures of Ahr have contained ends or end portions, the ribbon-like strips of the present invention are only interconnected together at their proximal end portions. The distal end portions are free and unattached so that the gather together and develop a total width that becomes gradually reduced in the crotch region as shown in Fig. 2 and discussed in the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6.

The braded structures of Ahr may compress or collapse in the thickness direction toward the backsheet or core, but there is no disclosure of the width of the braded structure becoming reduced in the crotch region.

It is thus submitted that the present invention is both structurally and functionally patentably distinguishable over Ahr.

It is further noted that applicants' independent claim 1 requires that, when used together with a body fluid absorbent article, the urine guiding article is attached onto an inner surface of the body fluid absorbent article.

In Ahr, the braded structures are provided between the topsheet and core or between the backsheet and core, or the braded structures can serve as the topsheet or a portion of the topsheet.

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However, there are no embodiments in Ahr in which the braded structures are attached to a inner surface overall article.

Accordingly, Ahr further fails to anticipate, teach or otherwise render obvious this structural feature of applicants' claimed invention.

Based upon the above distinctions between the prior art relied upon by the Examiner and the present invention, and the overall teachings of prior art, properly considered as a whole, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner cannot rely upon the prior art as required under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipating applicant's claimed invention.

It is, therefore, submitted that any reliance upon prior art would be improper inasmuch as the prior art does not remotely anticipate, teach, suggest or render obvious the present invention.

It is submitted that the claims, as now amended, and the discussion contained herein clearly show that the claimed invention is novel and neither anticipated nor obvious over the teachings of the prior art and the outstanding rejection of the claims should hence be withdrawn.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of the claims and an early allowance of the claims is believed to be in order.

It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the Official Action and reconsideration is requested.

The prior art made of record, but not relied upon by the Examiner on page 6 of the Office Action has been noted. This prior art is not believe to be particularly pertinent to applicants' claimed invention.

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If upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that there remain outstanding issues in the present application that could be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's patent counsel at the telephone number given below to discuss such issues.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 12-2136 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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